DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 248 072 RC 014 899

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TITLE Legislative Concerns of the Texas Farmworker: Historic Perspective.
PUB DATE Aug 84
NOTE 38p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Rural Sociological Society (47th, College Station, TX, August 22-25, 1984).
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Agricultural Laborers; Braceros; Farm Labor; Group Behavior; Income; *Labor Legislation; Labor Problems; Mexican Americans; *Migrant Workers; Political Influences; *Social Action; *Social Change; Socioeconomic Influences; Strikes; *Unions
IDENTIFIERS Chavez (Cesar); Moya (Jesus); Orendain (Antonio); *Social Movements; United Farm Workers

ABSTRACT

In spite of recent advances in mechanization, farmworkers continue to be a vital and necessary element in the harvesting of American crops. However, farmworkers, whether migrant or non-migrant, continue to have the lowest annual income of all occupational groups. The overriding concern is one of powerlessness. Farmworkers have been excluded at the federal and state levels from protective legislation covering minimum wage standards, unemployment insurance, child labor protection, and the benefits of the National Labor Relations Act which guarantees labor the right to organize and bargain for wages. In the last 20 years, the mobilization of Texas farmworkers has developed from an abortive strike attempt to an operational network of legislative and political clout. The political balance is changing in Texas from a predominantly rural conservative base to a growing urban and liberal coalition. The actions and reactions of mobilized and mobilizing groups move across the Texas political arena changing the nature of its character. Strikes, marches, and organizational efforts have served to shake off the apathy and sense of powerlessness which has maintained farmworkers in a state of poverty and despair. The obstacles continue to be great, yet efforts are being made to overcome them in an effective manner. (Author)

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LEGISLATIVE CONCERNS OF THE TEXAS FARMWORKER: HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE

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Paper presented at the Rural Sociological Society Meeting, August 1984.

Appreciation is extended to Dr. B. E. Aguirre for advice on the analysis of social movements.

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Abstract

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HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE

Marjorie L. Coppock (Texas A & M University)
Paper presented at the Rural Sociological Society Meeting held at Texas A & M University , August 23, 1984

In spite of recent advances in mechanization, farmworkers continue to be a vital and necessary element in the harvesting of American crops. However, farmworkers, whether migrant or non-migrant, continue to have the lowest annual income of all occupational groups. The overriding concern is one of powerlessness. Farmworkers have been excluded at both the federal and state levels from protective legislation covering minimum wage standards, unemployment insurance, child labor protection and the benefits of the National Labor Relations Act which guarantees labor the right to organize and bargain for wages. In the last 20 years the mobilization of Texas farmworkers has developed from an abortive strike attempt to an operational network of legislative and political clout. The political balance is changing in Texas from a predominantly rural conservative base to a growing urban and liberal coalition. The actions and reactions of mobilized and mobilizing groups move across the political arena of Texas changing the nature of its character. Strikes, marches and organizational efforts have served to shake off the apathy and sense of powerlessness which has maintained farmworkers in a state of poverty and despair. The obstacles continue to be great, yet efforts are being made to overcome them in an effective manner.

LEGISLATIVE CONCERNS OF THE TEXAS FARMWORKER: HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE

Marjorie L. Coppock

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Rural Sociological Society Meeting, August 1984

In the last 30 years the established social order in the United States has been challenged by groups seeking increased access to the political process and reward structure of the country. Powerless groups have mobilized and organized to establish a new order of social relationships with greater opportunities. Herbert Blumer (1969, pg. 76) analyzed characteristics of collective groupings and saw in them the process of social change. He states, "They have the dual character of implying the disintegration of the old and the appearance of the new". He sees social movements arising from dissatisfaction with the current form of life and pointing toward a new order of life. Social movements signify value changes which Blumer calls cultural drifts. Such drifts stand for a shift in the conceptions people have about themselves and their rights and privileges. J. Craig Jenkins and Charles Perrow (1977) discuss these actions of insurgency as organized attempts to change the social structure and thrust new interest groups into the decision making process. They note that since 1963 insurgent challenges have come from powerless groups on virtually all sides.

PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORIES

Many social theorists have analyzed the processes of action and interaction that have been utilized in the establishment of social movements, and conditions leading to success and failure have been outlined. Explanations have been proposed as to the determining factors which give rise to collective attempts to change the social structure.

Neil Smelser (1962) outlined a comprehensive theory of the conditions 'necessary and sufficient' for the occurrence of collective behavior. His theory contends that collective behavior is an attempt by people under stressful conditions to alter their social situations. He proposes a progression of six conditions which will lead to some form of collective behavior. The first condition is a structural conduciveness in the environment which makes collective behavior possible. Democratic countries are more tolerant of collective behavior than totalitarian countries. The second condition is structural strain, such as poverty or discrimination, that places a group of people under stressful conditions. The third condition is the development of a generalized belief among the people enduring stress as to the causes of the stress and the appropriate responses to it. A precipitating factor, such as a conflict between the residents and the police, leads to the fifth condition which is organized mobilization for action. Leaders must emerge and encourage others to follow. The final condition is the response of the social control mechanisms such as the police, the media and other groups in the environment. Responses

may range from indifference, tolerance or negotiation on the one hand to violent suppression on the other. Various responses serve to prevent collective action or to provoke it.

Other writers have also explained the occurrence of political unrest as a result of economic deprivation and frustration. Manoucher Parvin (1973) outlines the communication process as a factor in the formation of expectations and their transformation into demands. As people become aware of the living habits of others they become involved in the "revolution of rising expectations". Ted Gurr (1970) outlines this idea as "relative deprivation" which he defines as the discrepency between value expectations and capacities. He sees relative deprivation as the determining factor that leads to discontent, anger, rage and social rebellion.

More recent theorists of social movements downplay the importance of group discontent or social strain as determining factors of collective action. They contend that deprivation and strain are constants that are always in existence in a society. McCarthy and Zald (1977) argue that there has been a lack of emphasis on the ways in which persons and institutions from outside the deprived group become involved. They suggest that grievances and discontent may be created and manipulated by social movement entrepreneurs. Social movements require extensive resources such as money, labor, social support, organizing skills, means of communication and access to meeting locations. The resource mobilization theory of social movements sees social movements not as spontaneous grass roots developments from which natural leaders emerge, but rather as organizations

formed by professionals and funded by foundations, governments and other established organizations. The strategies, tactics, and goals are seen as rational decisions made by a centralized leadership unit which controls and directs the use of resources (Turner,1981). Jenkins and Perrow (1977), in their examination of the farmworker movement in California, conclude that the success of the movement in the late 1960's can be explained by changes in the political environment and support from liberal organizations and organized labor rather than by the deprivation of the group or by the internal characteristics of the movement.

Several researchers (Park and Burgess, 1924: Lang and Lang, 1961: and Blumer, 1969) note that social movements develop in stages. Blumer (1969, pg. 79) outlines the career stages of social movements. He notes that different styles of leadership are necessary at different stages of movement development. The first stages of a social movement are amorphous and poorly organized. People are uneasy and restless. An agitator will play an important leadership role in the early stages. The role of an agitator is to dislodge the people from old ways of thinking and acting and move them in new directions. As the movement develops, the objectives and grievances will become sharpened and increasingly focused. A prophet or reformer will be needed to define and promote a vision of hope for the future. Formalization develops with the establishment of organized rules, policies, tactics and discipline. The type of leadership necessary at this stage will be the qualities of a statesman, negotiator and diplomat. When definite personnel and

structure evolve to carry out the procedures, the leadership roles will be those of an administrator.

Blumer contends, in opposition to resource mobilization theorists, that internal characteristics of a movement are also important determinants of movement success. Blumer (1969) discusses the development of esprit de corps within a social movement. He defines this as the feeling of closeness within a group which develops a sense of common experience and vision. As a movement develops goals and strategies, the identification of groups or persons who stand in opposition to them become identified as the 'enemy'. This often develops spontaneously as the awareness of the outgroup creates solidarity within the movement. Working together for common goals and values creates a feeling of fellowship. Singing, dancing, picnics and social events are used to increase the informal friendships among the movement. Mass meetings, marches, demonstrations and ceremonies symbolize and reinforce the common values and goals shared by the movement. In addition to a feeling of esprit de corps, morale is required for persistence and determination. Morale is based on a set of convictions that establish the rightness and inevitable success of the movement as a sacred mission. The ideology of a movement plays a crucial role in success. An idology presents the basic tenets of the movement in a way that appeals to the masses. It establishes the values, convictions, direction, justification and inspiration. The choice of appropriate tactics also becomes important in determining movement success.

Edward Walsh (Feb.,1978) decries monocausal explanations for movement causation and success. He contends that they ignore the

influence cycle between a movement and its environment. Walsh states that the nature of the political environment, internal characteristics of a movement, creative leadership and ideology are all crucial factors in movement success. He concludes that a process model that includes the dynamic reciprocity between the social structure, deprived groups and 'great persons' may prove more fruitful than monocausal explanations. Walsh notes that in California the farmworker movement was not launched and sustained predominantly or solely by a liberal coalition and favorable political environment, as suggested by Jenkins and Perrow (1977), but rather that farmworker leaders creatively used and often directed this coalition. Strategic decisions by leaders were influential in broadening the base of support. For example, Cesar Chavez used the ethnic and religious homogeneity of the farmworker membership to gather support from the activist wing of the Catholic Church. The simultaneous use of the strike and boycott created a critical and valuable interchange between the fields and the city, and the use of fasts and symbolic marches influenced the nature of the environmental response.

Turner (1984) also avoids addressing a single explanation for the develoment of social movements. He sees social movements developing from interactive processes that are continuous, sequential and cumulatiave. Norms emerge from a continuous flow of events which cause revisions in both conceptions and actions. He suggests that people engage in collective action when they develop a sense of obligatory mission, when they find social support for their actions, when there is sufficient absense of

sanctions, when pre-existing communication networks allow for collective interpretations, and when resource mobilization is both feasible and timely.

VARIABLES INFLUENCING THE SUCCESS OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

The environmental factors, intra-movement characteristics and the interaction between a movement and its environment must all be considered in understanding movement outcomes. This perspective emphasizes 'process' rather than success or failure. This process focuses on the action and reaction that takes place between the participating groups. Action by one group will create a reaction by another group that will in turn change both the movenment organization and the environment. This continuing interaction and the changes that occur from it will be highlighted in this article. The table below summarizes the variables of the interacting groups.

INTERACTION BETWEEN A MOVEMENT AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT		MOVEMENT CHARACTERISTICS
Government Legislation		Group deprivation Awareness of strain
Control mechanisms Police Courts	← ACTION REACTION →	Leadership style Esprit de corps Solidarity Fellowship Mass meetings
Organizations Churches Labor Unions Business Other groups	ACTION → ← REACTION	Morale Sense of mission
Media		Ideology Tactics
Countermovements		Professional Resources

RESEARCH METHODS

This paper is a descriptive and historical account of the mobilization efforts of the farmworker movement in Texas. Several sources of information have been used to obtain data for the article: 1) newspaper accounts, 2) The Texas Observer: A Journal of Free Voices, 3) state and federal reports, 4) articles and analyses by social theorists, 5) personal interviews with persons involved in farmworker organization, 6) personal attendance at the 1980 United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO (UFW) Convocation in San Juan, Texas, 7) Organizational literature distributed by the farmworker organizations, and 8) The Texas State Plan for Farmworkers distributed by Texas Rural Legal Aid, Inc.

Several researchers (Jenkins and Perrow, 1977: Walsh, 1978) have analyzed the mobilization process of the California farmworker movement by breaking the analysis into time periods. This procedure maintains clarity of perspective and sequence and will be used in this paper to delineate the political and legislative developments of the Texas farmworker movement.

THE TEXAS FARMWORKER: DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

The major home base areas for migrant and seasonal farmworkers are Texas, Southern California and Florida. Texas is the home base for the largest of these groups. The Governor's Office of Migrant Affairs submitted a report in 1976 (pg. 147) noting that there were 85,600 migrant and seasonal farworker

households in Texas, containing 496,000 farmworkers and dependents. Of this number 375,658 migrate in order to obtain work. Because farmworkers often migrate in family units, 40% of this number represents children. The largest concentrations of farmworkers in Texas have their home base in the Rio Grande Valley and the Western Panhandle, however almost half the counties of Texas have a population of 500 or more farmworkers (Texas State Plan for Farmworkers, 1982, pg. 22). The annual median income for farmworker households is below $4,000. Ninety-two percent of farmworker households made below $8,000. The mean size of households is six persons. Ninety-five percent of the farmworkers are of Mexican-American or Mexican origin. Seventy-two percent of the heads of households were born in the United States. Eight-four percent of the households are headed by males. The average educational attainment level is six years.

The health status for migrant and seasonal farmworkers is similar to the health status of people in third world countries. Health problems relate to overcrowded housing, poor sanitation, lack of safe drinking water, inadequate sewage disposal, and pest infestation. Occupational health hazards relate to disabling back injuries from stoop labor, pesticide poisoning and accidents from machinery. Death from communicable diseases is 2.5 times higher for farmworkers than the national rate. The life expectancy for farmworkers is 50 years as compared to the national life expectancy of about 70 years. Agriculture is second only to mining in occupational fatality rates (Texas State Plan for Farmworkers, 1982, pgs. 24-41).

THE FARMWORKER AND LEGISLATION

The detrimental living and working conditions of farmworkers result from their powerlessness, their inability to exercise control over their destinies. They have been excluded or inadequately covered by protective federal and state laws. Farm workers are not covered by the National Labor Relations Act of 1935, which guarantees labor the right to organize and bargain collectively for wages. Until 1966 the minimum wage provisions of the federal Fair Labor Standard Acts did not cover agricultural workers. When it was extended to farmworkers only workers employed by growers using more than 500 man days of farm labor in a calendar quarter were covered. Although the use of children as industrial workers was outlawed by the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, the children of farmworkers have been essentially unprotected. In 1977 Congress amended this act, which previously prohibited labor in commercial agriculture by children under 12, to allow 10 and 11 year olds to harvest crops (Ellsberg, 1979). In 1981 there were an estimated 397,000 children, ages 8-15 working in agriculture (Garcia, 1981, pg. 11). Although some laws have been passed for the protection of farmworkers, they have been inadequately enforced or not enforced at all. Officials realize that many employers violate the laws, however they argue that the temporary work arrangements make enforcement difficult.

Farm workers have been excluded from legislation on the argument that "farming is different" from other American businesses. in fact, however, technological advances have turned

farming into an industry. In 1959 12.9% of American corporate farms paid 80.7% of the total farm wage bill (Hearings, 1969, pg. 988-990). Texas has benefited substantially from farm labor. The agribusiness and agricultural economy in Texas is more than $33.7 billion per year. Texas ranks second to California in agricultural marketing receipts. Since 1960 the average size farm in Texas has increased to 746 acres and the trend is toward increased centralization (Texas State Plan for Farmworkers, 1982, pg. 9). The legislative protection for farmworkers, however, has not improved along with industrial changes in farming. One factor preventing the improvement of farmworker legislation has been the strong representation of rural agribusiness interests in both federal and state legislatures. Policies concerning agriculture have been implemented to ensure the producer with a readily available supply of cheap labor.

TEXAS FARMWORKERS: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE PRIOR TO 1966

The Texas farm labor force has been composed almost entirely of Mexican-Americans and Mexican nationals. In 1848 the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo confirmed the United States claim to Texas. Most of the Mexican people living in the territory decided to adopt U. S. citizenship. A history of conflict and struggle ensued between the Mexican and Anglo settlers. Anglo settlers succeeded in amassing huge tracts of land, often through the use of fraud, bribery and outright violence. The tendency was toward concentration of landholdings in the hands of ever smaller numbers of growers. The Rio Grande Valley became a major center for the production of fruits and vegetables for the national

market. Much of the growth was made possible by the growers use of low paid Mexican and Mexican-American workers. Social progress for Mexican-Americans was blocked by Jim Crow racial segregation practices. Jennings (1980, pg. 58) contends that the class homogeneity of the farmworkers was a deliberate decision by the growers. Some towns warned that Anglo workers would not be welcome. Jennings quotes one grower as saying, "I am opposed to working our land with...Whites. We can't handle them as we do the Mexicans."

The accessibility of Mexican farm labor has impacted the condition of the Texas farmworker. Mexican farmworkers have crossed the Border to work the crops for a hundred years or more, however World War II brought a national shortage of American farm labor. At this time farmworkers were imported from Mexico to fill this manpower gap. The Bracero Act of 1951 was established between Mexico and the U.S. to regulate this exchange. Although the Bracero program ended in 1964, temporary field workers continued to gain legal immigration under section 101, category H-2 of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952. This act allows aliens to enter the U. S. to perform temporary services if unemployed persons capable of performing such work cannot be found locally (Texas Migrant Labor: A Special Report, 1969). An equally serious problem impacting Texas farm labor is the illegal entry of Mexican nationals. Since regulations to legal immigration have been tightened, the number of illegal entries has skyrocketed.

INITIAL ORGANIZING ATTEMPTS - 1966,1967

When organizational attempts for Texas farmworkers began in the spring of 1966 the accessibility of inexpensive laborers from Mexico became a problem of immediate concern. Farmworkers struck three melon ranches in the lower Rio Grande Valley. Mexican workers were used by the growers as strike breakers (Goodwyn, 1967, pg. 16-17). The day the strike began, the organizer was arrested for disturbing the peace. The day after the strike a court restraining order against picketing was granted (Olds, 1966).

Texas has been and remains a strong non-union state. In 1968 a pamphlet officially described Texas to businessmen. It stated that: strikes or picketing for recognition for bargaining are prohibited; mass picketing is illegal; Texas has no laws covering minimum wages; Texas has no state labor relations act; and no other major manufacturing state offers so many economics in unemployment compensation taxes (The Lot of Labor, 1969, pg. 4).

In 1966 the farmworkers were asking for a state minimum wage of $1.25 an hour. To bring the concern to the attention of the people of Texas, the farmworkers staged a 468 mile march from Rio Grande City to Austin. The march became a rallying point for the farmworkers. Eleven marchers were selected to march to Austin. The Texas AFL-CIO endorsed the strikers and pledged cash contributions, good clothes, and medical care for the marchers as well as a coordinator. Hank Brown, state labor president said, "We're talking about $25,000" (Texas Observer, July 22, 1966, pg. 8). Catholic and Protestant clergy and bishops gave open support. The marchers were greeted by crowds

of supporters along the way. When they arrived in Corpus Christi more than 2,000 supporters joined them (The Worker, Aug. 28, 1966). The marchers arrived in Austin on Labor Day, where thousands gathered at the capitol steps for a Labor Day Rally. Cesar Chavez was present and stated that 15 NFW organizers would be sent to the Valley. Chavez sent Antonio Orendain and Bill Chandler to the Rio Grande Valley to take over the leadership. Orendain was a co-founder of the farmworkers movement with Chavez in 1962 (Olds, 1966, pgs. 6-8).

Although the march gained support for the farmworkers, it also gained opposition. The John Birch society accused the organizers of Communist agitation and infiltration. They distributed handbills in Austin at the Labor Day Rally (R. D., Sept. 2, 1966, pg. 4). Catholic parishioners who owned farms complained of partisanship within the church. One grower told his priest that he couldn't pay $1.25, that it would be cheaper to automate and not hire workers. In January of 1967 a shift occurred in the commitment of the Catholic Church to the strike. Three activist priests were transferred to other assignments. An unidentified priest was quoted as saying, "Word has come down through the ranks that Archbishop Lucey would like all priests to realize that the coin has two sides. Sure it's a good thing to work for the little people. But there are other rights to be considered too" (G. O.,1967, pg. 4).

Before the beginning of the 1967 melon seasons, local law officials in the Rio Grande Valley called in the Texas Rangers, a special state police force. When the UFW began striking the melon

fields, the Rangers arrested over 100 strikers. Along with the arrests, however, the Rangers were charged with acts of brutality and violations of civil rights of farmworkers (Texas Observer, June 9, 1967, pg. 14-15). As a result of complaints of violence, the U. S. Senate Subcommittee on Migratory Labor held a two day hearing in the Rio Grande Valley in July of 1967. Senator Harrison A. Williams, who chaired the hearings, concluded, "that Captain Allee and Texas Rangers under his direction have trespassed upon private property, made numerous arrests without legal cause, used physical force far beyond that required to take a subject into custody, participated in acts of strikebreaking and committed other infringements of personal and property rights" (Pass, 1967).

Critics see the use of the Rangers as an outgrowth of the political climate favoring growers. Legislation and law enforcement agencies have favored farm owners rather than the farmworkers. Cesar Chavez, president of the UFW, saw that the political climate in Texas was too hostile. He decided to concentrate organizing efforts in California. Chavez believed that mistakes had been made in that a strike had been called without the development of a community support base, and that the UFW had been called in on a strike that they were not prepared for (Olds, 1966, pg. 5).

A state minimum wage of $1.25 an hour was established in Texas in 1971. It is presently $1.40 an hour. However the coverage is limited. Only employers who use between 300-500 man days of labor in a 3 month period are required to pay the state minimum. Above 500 man days, workers are covered by federal

laws.

INTERIM PERIOD - 1968-1974; CHICANO POLITICAL MOBILIZATION

The years following the farmworker strikes saw the development of growing political awareness and a new militancy among Mexican-Americans in Texas. Foundation grants and federal programs played a large role in sponsoring and encouraging this mobilization. These years saw the development of the federally sponsored War on Poverty programs such as Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) and Minority Mobilization (MM). The VISTA program is the domestic arm of the peace corps and MM's are local people trained to work with VISTA. The VISTA-MM people set up self-help projects in the barrios, and informed the people about available government services. One VISTA member said that far more important, however, was instilling self-awareness and self-pride among the poor, who for generations have humbled themselves (G.O., 1969, pg. 4). Another War on Poverty program was MACHOS, an anti-poverty group of South El Paso run by poor people from El Paso. The thrust of the organization was to encourage the poor to organize themselves into a force to represent their own interests (Sinclair, 1969, pg. 8).

The Mexican-American Legal Defense Fund (MALDEF) was formed in 1968 and funded under an eight year $2.2 million Ford Foundation Grant. The cases pursued by MALDEF had one thing in common: discrimination based on ethnic origin or poverty which can be remedied by court action. In 1969 MALDEF had a staff of nine young lawyers who pursued civil rights for Mexican-Americans

in nearly every community in Texas. They also worked with cooperating attorneys throughout the Southwest. MALDEF made a $41,000 grant for legal aid to Cesar Chavez (Rodgers, 1969, pg. 6).

Another group involved in Chicano organizing was the Mexican-American Youth Organization (MAYO) formed in 1967 in San Antonio. MAYO undertook an effective school boycott in the Edcouch-Elsa district in 1969 in response to grievances suffered by the Mexican-American students. The strike's outcome greatly emboldened the young brown militants in Texas (G. O., 1969, pgs. 4-5).

Political organizing led to demonstrations. On March 1, 1969 450 people marched in South El Paso to protest the fact that their low income tenements had no gas for cooking and heating, thus forcing them to use kerosene (Bode, 1969, pg. 8). In April another massive mobilization occurred. This time in Del Rio. Unrest broke out when the county commissioners formally requested the Community Action Agency to discontinue the VISTA and MM programs on the grounds that they were engaging in political activity by involving themselves with MAYO activities and demonstrations. Three VISTA workers were dismissed. A march of over 3,000 persons gathered to demonstrate their support of the VISTA and MM programs (G. O., 1969, pg. 5).

In 1970 Albert Pena, Jr. of San Antonio withdrew from the Democratic Party in Texas to form a Chicano third party called La Raza Unida. Auxiliary Bishop Patrick Flores, the nation's first Mexican-American bishop gave his encouragement to La Raza Unida. "People call me and ask what is the purpose of La Raza Unida, and

ask 'Are they militant?' I answer, 'I hope they are' We are going to have to be militant without being unreasonable or unlawful" ("Raza Unida on Ballot", 1970, pg. 8).

The Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), a professional organizing group founded by Saul Alinsky in the 1940's, began operations in Texas in 1974 with the cooperation of the Catholic Church. The purpose of IAF is to develop individual leadership and to organize people for community action. Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS) in San Antonio and El Paso Interreligious Sponsoring Organization (EPISO) sponsored a series of training workshops designed to develop leadership. The Industrial Areas Foundation is the organizing group that trained Cesar Chavez in community organization and political mobilization (Brann, 1983, pg. 16).

INTERIM PERIOD, 1968-1974: VALLEY FARMWORKERS

While urban Mexican-Americans were becoming mobilized, organizational efforts on behalf of the farmworkers had been temporarily curtailed. In 1969 the Texas Council of Churches, the statewide association of Protestant churches, changed the nature of its support for farmworkers. The Council decided to discontinue its sponsorship of the VISTA program among the poor in the lower Rio Grande Valley. VISTA volunteers were accused of becoming entailed in a walkout of Mexican-American students from the Edcouch-Elsa schools. The Council also fired the Rev. Edgar Krueger, the Texas Council of Churches minister to the farmworkers during the Valley melon strikes (R. D., 1969, pg.

10).

After the farmworkers abortive attempt to organize in 1966 a trend developed toward federal support programs rather than unionzation. Hidalgo County, for example, home base for an estimated 77,000 farmworkers, was funded for at least 27 aid programs. Over a period of 10 years, between 1968-1978, $251,718,920 of federal funds were channeled into Hidalgo County. Although programs were funded and established, many farmworkers were unable to take advantage of them. Farmworkers are hardworking, proud, and not eager to take government handouts. Fewer than half of those eligible were receiving public assistance in 1976, and only a little more were certified for food stamps (Davidson, 1978, pg. 5). Skeptics argue that federal funds were structured to give farmworkers just enough to fear its loss if they tried to right wrongs. James Harrington (1978, pg. 12), who works with the farmworkers in the Rio Grande Valley, contends that the federal support programs did not transfer economic power but instead protected the status quo.

During this period organizational efforts by the UFW were focused on the California grape and lettuce boycotts. In 1968 the UFW appealed to the people in Texas through the Texas Observer, a populist news magazine, to become involved in the grape boycott. In 1970 an advertisement appeared in the Texas Observer paid for by the Tarrant County Friends of the Farmworkers. It read, "JOIN THE REVOLUTION. Help Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers Organiziing Committee-AFL-CIO. Spend the summer working with the grape boycott committee in your community" (Texas Observer, 1970, pg. 8). Twelve names were

listed as contacts in the major cities.

In late 1970 an Anti-Boycott group with 600 members formed in the lower Rio Grande Valley opposing the UFW boycott efforts. Roland O'Con, executive vice-president of the McAllen based Texas Food Producers Council, Inc., said his group of growers, shippers, and packers were seeking state and national legislation to bring farm workers under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). The NLRA forbids the use of secondary boycott which is a major pressure tactic used by the UFW. O'Con stated that, "Until we have some laws to regulate organizing, we will resist, by any legal means, efforts to organize field hands" (Antosh, 1971).

Conservative groups such as the John Birch society and the Texas Farm Bureau were continously outspoken about what they saw as a communist conspiracy that included both foundation funding and federal agencies. C.K. Alewine wrote in the Valley Morning Star in March of 1971, "One organization active in presenting manufactured grievances in the Valley is funded by Ford Foundation. Another...receives support from all sorts of high places including a federal agency. It appears the Communists have employed the same racist techniques they used on blacks to promote a 'brown revolution' entrapping citizens of south Texas who are of Mexican ancestry." In 1971 Patty Newman highlighted conservative fears by outlining a scheme called "El Plan de Aztlan". She makes a distinction between Mexican-Americans and 'militant Chicanos'. She outlines "El Plan de Aztlan" as a "Chicano plan which seriously envisions taking over (by force if necessary) certain lands of the Southwest (namely California,

Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and part of Colorado)...The plan is to form a new Chicano nation on these lands - a Nation of Aztlan - which would be separate, free and independent of the United States" (pg. 15). She includes in the leadership of this plan Corky Gonzales, Reies Tijerina and Cesar Chavez.

In 1973 the UFW returned to the Valley, opening a Texas branch of its National Farm Worker Service Center on land donated by the Catholic Church near San Juan (Russell, 1978, pg. 18). Antonio Orendain was acting director. Organizing efforts were, however, limited to community development and boycott efforts on behalf of the California lettuce strikes then in progress.

FARMWORKER SPLITS, 1975-1984

In 1975 Orendain became inpatient waiting for Chavez to begin organizing actively in Texas. Orendain took it upon himself to lead Valley melon pickers out on strike. When a march of about 200 farmworkers arrived at the El Texano Ranch, a CBS-TV report showed strikers throwing melons and rocks at non-striking farmworkers. Chavez angrily called Orendain, and an argument over tactics ensued. Chavez is committed to non-violence as an organizational tactic and as a principle. When Chavez tried to re-assign Orendain to boycott duty in Chicago, Orendain resigned from the UFW and formed the Texas Farm Workers Union (TFWU) (Cory, 1975, pg. 3). The two groups developed different tactics and strategies and have taken different stances on legislation. In 1983 another split occurred. Jesus Moya, the principle organizer for Orendain, split from the TFWU to form the International Union of Agricultural and Industrial Workers.

TEXAS FARM WORKERS UNION, ORENDAIN AND MOYA

Orendain is described as a "soft-spoken, often eloquent man known for his long black mustache and his black flat-top hat" (Holley, 1981, pg. 6). Orendain has worked as a friend and colleague of Chavez since 1950. He regrets his break with Chavez, but says, "If Chavez really believed in Texas he could help us get a law (collective bargaining legislation). It would automatically put us (the TFWU) out of business, but that's fine because we don't have the money from the AFL-CIO like he does."

After the split Orendain began devising media events to promote his concern for collective bargaining legislation for farmworkers. In 1977 he led a march from the Rio Grande Valley to Austin to promote support for the introduction of a Bill in the legislature which would recognize and protect the rights of farmworkers to organize labor unions (Russell, 1982, pg. 7). Governor Briscoe served the marchers refreshments, but refused to support the legislation. Orendain continued leading the marchers to Washington D. C. arriving on Labor Day with a petition for Carter to support collective bargaining legislation. In 1979 the same bill was introduced in Austin. Thirty-five members of the TFWU again staged a march, this time 632 miles from Muleshoe to Austin. The bill continues to be entered and ignored in each session.

Orendain established 2 service centers for farmworkers in the Valley. He also put out a newsletter and ran a weekly "Voice of the Campesino" broadcast on Spanish language station KGBT (Cory,

1975, pg. 3). He has organized strikes in onion fields of Raymondville and the High Plains and in the South Texas citrus fields. Orendain's principle organizer has been Jesus Moya, a Chicano activist from California. The strikes have consisted of a series of guerilla style skirmishes (Davis, 1980, pg. 5).

The TFWU does not accept dues from its members. Financing comes from grants and donations. For several years the TFWU received funds from the Catholic Church, but in 1980 these funds were cut off. Orendain believes the UFW was responsible for this because they think the TFWU is "too radical" and "too red" to take on organizing (Davis, 1980, pg. 5). In late 1982 Orendain's offices were burned. Orendain believes the UFW was responsible for this also. Since his offices and equipment were destroyed he has been unable to put out newsletters or any written material.

Jesus Moya broke with Orendain in 1983 to form the International Union of Agricultural and Industrial Workers and is organizing in the Texas Panhandle. Moya continues to further the concerns of farmworkers through the strategies of public confrontation, strikes, pickets and marches (Austin American Statesman, July, 25, 1984). Orendain continues to operate with a skeletal staff in Pharr, organizing house meetings and providing services to t e farmworkers. He has not held any strikes or demonstrations in the past year. When asked about reconciliation with the UFW Orendain replied, "That's up to them. I have no quarrel with the UFW. Getting legislation for the farmworkers is what is most important" (Orendain, July, 1984).

UNITED FARM WORKERS OF AMERICA - AFL-CIO

After the split with Orendain the UFW Texas Project installed Rebecca Flores Harrington as president. In 1975 committees were set up in the colonias to listen to the problems of the people in order to determine what was most urgent. Priorities focused on legislative lobbying and the establishment of social services to farmworkers (Holley, 1981, pg. 6). Whereas the strategies of Orendain and Moya were focused on agitation and public confrontation, the strategies of the UFW were those of political organization and negotiation. The UFW has held back on pushing for a bill on collective bargaining. They feel that the political climate has not been supportive enough, and that amendments and substitutions could create a bill that would work against the efforts of farm worker organization, as was done in Arizona with a bill that outlaws harvestime strikes and consumer boycotts of agricultural products (Russell, 1977, pg. 7).

The first annual United Farm Workers Convocation of Texas was held in February of 1979. The annual conventions are orderly gatherings with a gentle but determined sense of unity and c
purpose. Along with the delegates from local organizing committees, families attend with their children. The speakers and proposals for legislation alternate with singing, dancing and skits. An ecumenical religious service and communion is held. Catholic priests play an active supporting role. Concerned politicians and representatives from the AFL-CIO attend the conventions. In 1983 the Texas State Agricultural Commissioner, Jim Hightower, addressed the farmworkers.

At the fifth and sixth annual conventions, held in 1983 and 1984, Rebecca Harrington listed victories achieved and hopes supported. An 89 mile march from Brownsville to San Juan called attention to the low wages paid to farmworkers. The State Board of Health passed regulations requiring all growers to provide toilet and hand washing facilities and drinking water in the fields. The UFW sent 100 farm workers into neighborhoods campaigning for Democratic Party candidates and the candidates won. The UFW worked to get out the vote in the McAllen city election and helped to create a Mexican-American majority in the city council for the first time in McAllen's history. Community work in the colonias accomplished the inclusion of trash collections, mail service, street signs, street paving, drainage ditches and water service in some areas. UFW members now sit on some community boards such as the PTA, the precinct board and the Lower Rio Grande Development Council. Plans are being made to build a farm worker clinic on the UFW property in San Juan.

Getting people out to vote and finding candidates to support was a prime organizing concern of the UFW. By 1980 four lawmakers were in Austin because of UFW support (Holley, 1981, pg. 6). Mexican-American legislators in Austin formed the Mexican-American Legislative Caucus. This coalition formed to wield clout in the Texas legislature in support of Hispanic concerns. Mexican-American house leaders have 50 votes to offer for return votes on issues of concern to Mexican-Americans and farmworkers. Representative Juan Hinojosa says, "We're telling them we'll help with their bills if they help us, If they oppose ours, we'll oppose theirs" (Rosser, 1983). Although bills

extending worker's compensation to farmworkers failed in four previous legislative sessions due to opposition of the Texas Farm Bureau and agri-business interests, in a special legislative session in June of 1984 the Mexican-American political clout was instrumental in accomplishing the passage of a such a bill.

Other legislative concerns sought for farmworker protection include: raising the state minimum wage, child labor protection, collective bargaining, abolished stoop labor, protection against pesticide exposure, unemployment compensation, condemnation of visiting worker programs (H-2 programs), and improved living conditions in the colonias. With the increased political awareness and participation by Hispanic voters and legislators the liklihood of accomplishing these goals is becoming possible. (Resolutions from the Texas Legislative Convocations, 1980-1984, United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO).

VALLEY INTERFAITH

In 1982 an alliance of Catholic and Protestant parishes and congregations in the Rio Grande Valley banded together to deal collectively with concerns of families and neighborhoods in the Valley. The group, named Valley Interfaith, hired the Industrial Areas Foundation to handle the organizing. It's first public meeting in June of 1983 drew 5,700 people in a confrontation with Texas Governor Mark White and Lieutenant Governor Bill Hobby (Brann, 1983). In February of 1984 Valley Interfaith presented the Reagan administration with a proposal for a $66,7 million public works project to provide jobs for more than 18,000

farmworkers in the Valley who had been left jobless by the December 1983 freeze. In March the group met with Tom Pauken, Reagan's ACTION director. Pauken turned down the group's proposal, and in place offered to set up a center to handle grants and to establish twelve food pantries, along with proposals for private sector job initiatives. Pauken then proceeded to attack the group with accusations of "Alinsky-style" organizations that "use threats, manipulate the news media, at times misinform the public, perhaps are more interestred in political organizing than concern for the poor, and have hidden agendas" (Lind, 1984, pg. 12). Ernesto Cortes, Jr., Industrial Areas Foundation director for Interfaith replied, "Valley Interfaith presented the Reagan administration officials a sound, workable strategy to deal with massive, depression-level unemployment, which would give the administration the opportunity to demonstrate compassion, sensitivity and reasonableness. We're not asking for assistance; we're asking for picks and shovels. Instead, we get political scorpions" (Lind, 1984, pg. 13).

CONCLUSIONS

The actions and reactions of mobilized and mobilizing groups continue to move across the political arena of Texas changing the nature of its character. In less than 20 years the mobilization of Texas farmworkers has developed from an abortive strike attempt to an operational network of legislative and political clout. The political balance is changing in Texas from a predominantly rural conservative base to a growing urban and liberal coalition. The process of political development grows

out of an action-reaction environment. The actions of one group cause a response from other groups and a change in the environment, creating a continuous shifting of political balance.

When Cesar Chavez became aware of the hostile political environment which existed in Texas in 1967 he withdrew temporarily from farmworker organizing. He shifted his organizational emphasis in Texas from conservative rural areas to boycott efforts in the more liberal urban areas. Many Mexican-Americans in the urban areas are descendants of a Mexican aristocracy that predates Anglo and European settlement. The roots of Mexican-Americans are grounded in the historical past of the area, and the culture is passed down through strong family and church traditions and ties. Many educated and urban Mexican-Americans remember a childhood as a farmworker or are only one generation away from the farmworker lifestyle. When Chavez appealed to urban and educated Mexican-Americans to help in the boycott of grapes and lettuce in support of California farmworkers, he had a receptive and sympathetic audience.

At this same time the Ford Foundation, the War on Poverty Programs and the Industrial Areas Foundation became outside agencies involved in the instigation, organization and mobilization of Mexican-American political interests through the funding and development of an unfolding series of political action groups. MALDEF, VISTA, MM, MACHOS, MAYO, La Raza Unida, COPS, EPISO and Valley Interfaith developed the community organizations and leadership abilities necessary to work toward social, political and economic improvements for Mexican-

Americans. They also developed the determined and militant posture necessary for political challenge.

The groups that stood in opposition to the farmworker movement such as the Anti-boycott groups, the Texas Farm Bureau, the John Birch Society, the growers' associations, and the Right-To-Work organizations failed to adequately address the concerns of poverty, suffering and injustice. Rather they chose to focus on accusations of outside agitators and communist infiltration. Texas is a strong non-union state with a pioneer tradition of free enterprise and social Darwinism. A racist overtone is extended to the confrontation by the fact that 95% of the farmworkers are of Mexican descent. During this 20 year period an influx of people moved into the sunbelt and Texas, many from the North and Northeast. To an increasingly urban and liberal population the arguments of rhetoric become insufficient to justify the vast inequalities within the social structure.

Since 1966, Texas farmworkers have actively sought to focus the atten on of the citizens of Texas on the dilemmas and frustrations that exist in the living and working conditions of farmworkers. The leaders of the three farmworker unions that developed in Texas demonstrate different styles of leadership that grow out of differing conceptions in ideology, strategy and tactics. Antonio Orendain and Jesus Moya have used the strategy of political agitation and public confrontation. Their use of marches, strikes, and public agitation have served to arouse the farmworkers and the public to the awareness that new ways of thinking and acting are possible and necessary. These efforts dramatize the intensity and urgency of feelings necessary for

beginning organizations of social movements. The UFW, under the leadership of Chavez and Harrington has taken a more formalized and disciplined strategy to social change. They have stressed political organization, voter registration, election of sympathetic public officials and community organization. The UFW has used marches and mass gatherings not as the main strategy, but rather as a means of building social solidarity and group identity. The leadership qualities developed by the UFW have been those of the statesman, negotiator, diplomat and administrator.

Strikes, marches and organizational efforts have served to shake off the apathy and sense of powerless which has maintained farmworkers in a state of poverty and despair. Hope has been raised and awareness has been developed. The obstacles, problems and dilemmas continue to be great, yet efforts are being made to explore, confront and overcome them in an effective manner.

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